

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00128 070513Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 /058 W

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P R 070355Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1383

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 0128

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: CONTROL OF KOREAN NEWSPAPERS CONTINUES

REF: (A) 76 SEOUL 9321 240621Z NOV, (B) 76 SEOUL 10210 280946Z

DEC, (C) 76 SEOUL 10245 290845Z DEC, (D) 76 SEOUL 10289 300813Z DEC

SUMMARY. AMOUNT OF LEEWAY ALLOWED KOREAN PRESS IN REPORTING
STORIES WHICH ROKG MIGHT CONSIDER SENSITIVE HAS REMAINED
CONSTANT SINCE REF A REPORT LAST NOVEMBER. END SUMMARY.

1. STORIES ON SENSITIVE INTERNATIONAL ISSUES CONTINUED TO
APPEAR IN KOREAN PRESS OVER YEAR'S END. BETWEEN DECEMBER 29
AND JANUARY 1, THERE APPEARED IN FIVE MAJOR SEOUL DAILES
AT LEAST EIGHT STORIES ON RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN
SOUTH AFRICA, PRIEST IN ARGENTINA, AND COMMUNISTS IN
SPAIN. PRIOR TO EARLER REPORT (REF A), SUCH STORIES WERE
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 00128 070513Z

NOT ALLOWED.

2. CHECK WITH PRESS SOURCES ALSO INDICATES THAT THERE
IS NOT CAHNGE IN PRESS GUIDANCE FROM LAST REPORT: EDITORS
CONTINUE TO EXERCISE "SELF-CENSORSHIP" ON THEIR OWN AND
TO CONSULT INFORMALLY AS TO PLACEMENT OF SCUH SENSITIVE
STORIES. GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE TO PRESS IS ALL DONE BY

TELEPHONE CALLS, MOST OF WHICH COME FROM MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION (MCPI). DIFFICULTY OF EDITORS' POSITION IS INCREASED, HOWEVER, BY FACT THAT MANY ELEMENTS OF ROKG FEEL THEY MAY "GUIDE" PRESS IN CERTAIN AREAS (WITHOUT CHECKING WITH MUCI). IN PAST, BLUE HOUSE, FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND EVEN KOREA TRADERS' ASSOCIATION HAVE KILLED STORIES OFFENSIVE TO THEM.

3. IN ADDITION IT IS NOTABLE THAT PRESS TREATMENT (REFTELS B, C, AND D) OF DECEMBER 28 ROKG STATEMENTS ON "PROBLEMS PENDING" WITH US WAS VERY TIGHTLY CONTROLLED. EDITORIAL WRITERS AND EDITORS WERE BRIEFED EXTENSIVELY ON DECEMBER 27, AND PRESS RELEASES WERE PREPARED BY MOFA AND MUCI AND RELEASED TO PRESS EARLY DECEMBER 28 WITH EMBARGO UNTIL NOON. INSTRUCTIONS TO EDITORS STIPULATED THAT NO COMMENT BY KOREAN CORRESPONDENTS ABROAD WOULD BE ALLOWED AND THAT STORY WOULD RUN ITS COURSE BY DECEMBER 30.

4. UPSHOT IS THAT SOMEWHAT GREATER LATITUDE FOR PRESS NOTED IN NOVEMBER HAS CONTINUEDD BUT IT IS APPARENTLY LIMITED TO ARTICLES ABOUT COUNTRIES ON PERIPHERY OF KOREANS' AWARENESS AND INTEREST. GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE THAT STORIES ON SENSITIVE TOPICS LIKE DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONTROLS AND TRIALS, KCIA ACTIVITIES ABROAD, AND ALLEGED BUGGING OF BLUE HOUSE WILL APPEAR ONLY UNDER THE STRICTEST CONTROLS.
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